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RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [BEXP](#) [ECON](#) [ENRG](#) [KGHG](#) [KPAO](#) [OEXC](#) [PREL](#) [SENV](#) [SW](#)
SUBJECT: SWEDEN WELCOMES "NEXT BIG THING" INITIATIVE

REF: A. STATE 64364

[1](#)B. STOCKHOLM 202

[1](#)C. USEU MINCOUNS CHASE EMAIL OF JUNE 26

[1](#)1. (SBU) On July 2, Swedish MFA State Secretary Frank Belfrage told CDA that the "Next Big Thing" alternative energy technology initiative (NBT), as outlined in ref c, was "good news" and "exactly the kind of hands-on transatlantic cooperation we need for the Swedish Presidency." He recommended that the US side also talk with the EU Commission about it; the Swedish MFA has discussed with the Commission which seems very much in favor of it, per Belfrage.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Belfrage cited also the June 19 European Council conclusions as obliquely supporting both the US-EU Energy Council and the "Next Big Thing," with the later as the technology arm of the Council. Paragraph 43 of the Council Conclusions states in part: "The European Council reaffirms the strategic importance of transatlantic relations....Furthermore, the European Council welcomes the fact that the US proposed to enhance cooperation between the US and the EU on energy issues." Belfrage stressed that "energy issues" included both energy security and energy technology, and that Sweden is well placed to expand our existing bilateral alternative energy technology partnership during its Presidency.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Belfrage's one note of caution was to ensure that NBT would not be seen as a substitute for the tough work of the climate negotiators. CDA assured him that it was not the case. Belfrage agreed, and said he saw NBT as a way of helping to facilitate a global climate agreement at the COP-15 in Copenhagen.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Separately, on July 1, A/DCM Kirkconnell and DOE/EERE Director for Strategic Planning Rodgers held a teleconference with Tomas Kaberger, DirGen of the Swedish Energy Agency, to discuss programs under the existing bilateral alternative energy partnership. Rodgers noted that several joint goals going forward would require bringing in the EU, and he noted there is a proposal (the US-EU Energy Council) to do just that. Rodgers said promising areas for such cooperation include harmonizing standards and test procedures -- lighting technologies, car batteries and electric drivetrains. Kaberger agreed, noting for example that the Germans are pushing within the EU for an exclusive standard for plug-in hybrids that they are developing. Kaberger noted that EU collaboration takes longer and is harder to govern than our bilateral cooperation, but he agreed with Rodgers it is necessary. Kaberger also asked Rodgers that DOE send an appropriate high-level US official to two upcoming events in Sweden: a bio energy and cleantech conference in September, and a plug-in hybrid

conference in October.

[15.](#) (SBU) Comment: We have a flashing green light from the Swedes to pursue the NBT with the Commission and then with other member state governments.
SILVERMAN